

Governors: Responsibilities and Role

February 2020

Introduction	2
Constitutional form	2
Charitable status.....	2
Governing Body	2
Responsibilities of the governing body.....	2
The role of governors.....	3
Attributes and qualities of prospective governors.....	3
Standards of behaviour	4
Register of interests	4
Remuneration	4
Term of appointment.....	4
College year.....	5
Estimated time commitment	5
E-Governance.....	5

Introduction

South Devon College (SDC) is a further education college with a turnover of circa. £30 million. It provides a diverse range of leading courses from its five campuses located in Torbay and the surrounding area.

In May 2017 it was the first English College to achieve the Platinum Award for Investors in People. The same month it was also awarded a Gold TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework) and in November 2017, SDC achieved an overall 'grade 2' (or 'good') by Ofsted having been graded 'outstanding' since November 2008. It is currently on a focused journey back to 'outstanding'.

SDC educates and trains learners from the age of 14. It supports a significant number of 16-18 and adult (19+) learners, and offers a wide range of higher education courses.

Constitutional form

SDC is a Further Education Corporation (the 'Corporation') – a separate legal entity – as established by the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

The Instrument and Articles of Government of SDC, approved by the Privy Council, together with College's Standing Orders provides the framework of governance.

Charitable status

SDC is an exempt charity and governors must ensure that assets and income are applied in support of the charitable objectives of providing education and public benefit.

Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for directing and overseeing the work of the Corporation. Members of the governing body are known as governors.

The Governing Body operates with a number of committees. These undertake specific areas of work on behalf of the Governing Body, and governors are invited to join one or more of these committees.

Responsibilities of the Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for¹:

- the determination of the educational character and mission of the institution and for the oversight of activities;
- publishing arrangements for obtaining the views of staff and students on the determination and periodic review of the educational character and mission of the institution and the oversights of its activities;
- approving the quality strategy of the institution;
- the effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the corporation and safeguarding their assets;
- approving annual estimates of income and expenditure;
- the appointment, grading, suspension, dismissal and determination of the pay and conditions of service of the holders of senior posts and the Clerk, including, where the Clerk is, or is to be appointed as, a member of staff, the Clerk's appointment, grading, suspension, dismissal and determination of pay in the capacity of a member of staff; and
- setting a framework for the pay and conditions of service of all other staff

¹ SDC, Articles of Government, Section 3.

The role of governors

Governors are non-executive members of the Governing Body.

The primary role of governors is to contribute to the effective discharge of the governing body's responsibilities as detailed earlier by:

- offering informed and constructive contributions to the decision-making processes of the Governing body
- making their knowledge and expertise available to the Governing Body
- ensuring that the Governing Body exercises effective control over the strategic direction of the institution, through an effective planning process
- adequately assessing the performance of the institution against the strategic aims and targets approved by the Governing Body
- ensuring the institution is fully compliant with the legislative and regulatory requirements placed on the College.

Governors are also responsible for safeguarding, and

- all Governors at South Devon College are expected to be fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all learners. A fundamental responsibility of governors is to recognise that safeguarding covers, for instance, health and safety, equality and diversity and guarding against radicalisation and extremism.
- Governors are expected to undertake College safeguarding training at least once every three years.
- An important part of the role of governors is to ensure the College meets its requirements under the PREVENT duty.
- Governors will be expected to uphold and promote the fundamental

principles of British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Attributes and qualities of prospective governors

The Search and Governance Committee is delegated by the Governing Body to be responsible for identifying and recruiting governors and making recommendations to the Corporation as to their appointment.

The Committee is mindful of the mix of skills and specific attributes sought in filling any vacancy on the Governing Body, seeking at all times to ensure an appropriate balance and blend of different skills, expertise and backgrounds.

Irrespective of the particular attributes associated with a specific vacancy, the following generic attributes/qualities are sought from all prospective governors.

Knowledge and expertise

- Governors are expected to be working, or have worked, at a senior level in their chosen field and be familiar with high-level decision making.
- Individual governors will normally bring specialist knowledge, expertise and skills to the governing body, including, for example, knowledge of education; private, public or third sector organisations; specific functional areas; or an understanding of one or more of the professional domains with which the College is engaged.

Personal competences and values

- Effective interpersonal and communication skills, including the ability to establish good working relationships with other members of the governing body, the Principal and members of the Senior Leadership team.

- An empathy for the values, aims and objectives of a further education college

Disposition

- Ability to listen to others.
- To be constructive and supportive of the Principal and the senior team, but, when necessary, to offer effective challenge.
- An understanding of the distinction and boundaries between governance and management, avoiding any involvement in the executive management of the institution.
- An understanding and appreciation of the principles of governance, including collective responsibility, discharge of fiduciary duties and the seven principles of public life (see following section)
- Prepared to make the work of the governing body a high priority.

Standards of behaviour

Governors are expected to observe the seven principles of public life^{*}, namely:

Selflessness. Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not make decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or friends.

Integrity. Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their duties.

Objectivity. In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability. Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and

actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness. Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty. Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership. Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

*As established by the Nolan Committee, 1996.

Register of interests

In order to assist in meeting the standards of public life, the governing body has adopted a policy whereby governors are required to complete a Register of Interests. Further, if there is any matter of pecuniary or other personal interest being discussed at a meeting of the Governing Body, the governor concerned shall declare an interest and withdraw from any meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Remuneration

Governors are not remunerated, but are able to reclaim reasonable travel and other expenses incurred in the course of the College's business.

Term of appointment

Independent members of the governing body are appointed for a term of 4 years (student governors are elected and normally serve for 1 year).

Subject to review and recommendation by the Search and Governance Committee, governors

reaching the end of their term of office are eligible for reappointment for a further term of 4 years.

Attendance

The governing body has an attendance target of 80%.

Apologies for absence should be sent to the Head of Governance in advance of the meeting. There is an expectation that Governors will keep abreast of missed meetings via the minutes. If individual governor attendance drops below 60% discussions will take place to explore the issues and establish whether these can be resolved within a reasonable timescale.

College year

The College's year runs from the 1st August 20xx to 31st July 20xx.

Estimated time commitment

Time commitment

The time commitment, to fulfil the role of a Governor, is estimated to be a minimum of 7 days a year. This will increase if a Governor is asked to join one of the committees of the governing body.

Details of the commitment

The estimate of the time required is based upon preparation for, travel to, and participation in, meetings and other college events. These normally include:

- Three meetings of the governing body, typically held in December, March and July.
- Two Strategic Planning Meetings, normally held in October and May.

Governors are also encouraged to attend a variety of events taking place during the year, including award ceremonies, learning walks and meet the student and staff events. There is an expectation that each Governor attends a 'Meet the Students'

event at least once every two years to ensure some familiarity with the student experience. Governors are also expected to undertake training and development, as needed, to fulfil the requirements of the role.

E-Governance

The Governing Body has resolved to be 'paper free' and the printing of papers is only available to governors in exceptional circumstances. Ipads can be borrowed from the College to support the accessing of papers during meetings.

Remote access to meetings

In order to be as inclusive as possible, the Governing Body supports remote access to Governing Body meetings for those Governors who are unable to attend a meeting in person due to significant personal or professional commitments. Such commitments can be discussed in confidence with either the Chair and/or Head of Governance so that the necessary support arrangements can be put in place

